REMARKS

The examiner considers the application to contain four inventions or groups of inventions (Groups 1-4) which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. The examiner takes the position that Groups 1-4 do not relate to a single general inventive concept because they do not share a special technical feature which defines a contribution over the prior art, citing Kovalovich et al. (cited in ISR). The examiner states that Kovalovich discloses that administration of IL-6 protects against Fas-mediated death in the liver of mice by establishing a critical level of anti-apoptoptic hepatic proteins FLIP, Bcl-2 and Bcl-xL, and therefore the method disclosed therein is held to meet the limitations of Group I.

Applicants elect Group I with traverse. Traversal is based on the fact that, contrary to the present invention where a low dose of IL-6 is administered (see page 28, lines 8-9 which defines 0.1 mcg/kg to 10 mcg/kg to be low dose and 100 mcg/kg to 500 mcg/kg to be high dose), Kovalovich discloses administering 1 mcg/g (which is 1000 mcg/kg; page 26606, last sentence of right column) IL-6, which would even be higher than the defined high dose range in the present application. Accordingly, Kovalovich does not negate the special technical feature in the present invention which

defines a contribution over the prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement are therefore respectfully requested.

The examiner further requires an election of species requirement for one of the species of IL-6 to be administered. Applicants elect the species of IL-6 *per se* (not a mutein, isoform, fused protein, etc.) without traverse for prosecution on the merits. However, it is understood that upon allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141.

Favorable consideration and allowance are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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